

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 754

By Swann

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Vernon "Coach O"  
Osborne of Alcoa.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Vernon "Coach O" Osborne; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Osborne was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, one of the six children of Jasper and Elsie Osborne, Mr. Osborne was born in Wallins Creek, Kentucky, in October 1922; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Barbourville High School in Kentucky, Vernon Osborne served in the United States Army Air Corps with an unwavering sense of duty and patriotism as a B-24 pilot and bomber pilot instructor during World War II; and

WHEREAS, utilizing the G.I. Bill, Mr. Osborne attended Union College, where he excelled in basketball and baseball. After briefly playing semi-pro baseball, he obtained his master's degree in education from the College of William & Mary; and

WHEREAS, for thirty-nine years, Coach Vernon Osborne served with acumen and alacrity as the head coach of both the boys' basketball and baseball teams at Alcoa High School, in which position he earned the respect of his players, assistant coaches, and community alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, Coach O was an Alcoa legend in his own right; during his tenure as head basketball coach, his teams achieved a record of 855 wins to 340 losses, including twenty district titles, twelve regional championships, and ten state tournament appearances. Of those ten state tournaments, Coach O's teams finished as runners-up in 1965 and 1982 and obtained

state titles in 1959 and 1967. His tremendous record made him one of the winningest high school coaches in the nation; and

WHEREAS, a man of integrity who supported all of his student athletes, Coach Osborne threatened in the 1960s to pull the Alcoa Tornadoes out of the district tournament unless David Davis, Alcoa High School's first African-American varsity basketball player, was allowed to participate; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Coach Osborne was inducted into the Union College Hall of Fame, the East Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, the TSSAA Hall of Fame, the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, the Greater Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame, and the Blount County Sports Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, outside the basketball court, Mr. Osborne also had success with his part-time hobby of raising Beefmaster cattle and managing the Osborne Cattle Company; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Osborne was an active and devout member of Alcoa First Baptist Church, which he served faithfully for many years as a deacon, Sunday school teacher, and participant in a variety of the church's ministries; and

WHEREAS, he was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Vernon Osborne was most grateful for the love and support he shared with his wife, the late Margaret Ann Osborne; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Osborne will be fondly remembered by his daughters and sons-in-law, Bette and Henry Haile and Judy and Henry Davis; his grandchildren, Lea Davis, Marti Bittle, Carrie Davis, and EdaElla Davis; his great-grandchildren, Nora Kate Davis, Miller Davis, and Walker Bittle; his brother, Bill Osborne; and his sister, Betty Jane Ellison; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Osborne leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Vernon "Coach O" Osborne, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Osborne.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.